

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ATHENS 07909 011839Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

----- 077387

P 011645Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6113

S E C R E T ATHENS 7909

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK ELECTIONS: PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER

AVEROFF

1. IN A VERY PRIVATE CONVERSATION DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY HIS TRIP THROUGH NORTHERN GREECE WITH CARAMANLIS THIS PAST WEEKEND. AVEROFF SAID THAT BARRING SOME UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENT THE ELECTIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED NOVEMBER 17 AND CARAMANLIS WOULD WIN A BIG VICTORY.

2. I ASKED AVEROFF IF HE HAD REALLY BEEN APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE ELECTIONS COMING OFF ON SCHEDULE AND HE SAID, "FRANKLY, YES". HE SAID IT WAS NO SECRET THAT THERE WERE THOSE WHO WISHED TO DELAY OR PREVENT THE ELECTIONS, BOTH ON THE RIGHT AND ON THE LEFT, ALTHOUGH FOR DIFFERING REASONS. THE RIGHTISTS, MOSTLY FORMER JUNTA SUPPORTERS OR COLLABORATORS, FEARED THE OPENING UP OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS WOULD LEAD TO A BREAKDOWN IN PUBLIC ORDER -- "GREECE IS A DIFFICULT COUNTRY TO GOVERN", AVEROFF SAID. (I DID NOT CONTEST THE POINT.) THEY ALSO FEARED REPERCUSSIONS AGAINST THEMSELVES. SOME OF THE MILITARY TYPES "HAD SLAPPED PEOPLE AROUND", ACCORDING TO AVEROFF, AD FEARED BEING ACCUSED BY THEIR VICTIMS AND PUNISHED. THESE ELEMENTS WERE SUSCEPTIBLE TO APPEALS BY COUP PLOTTERS, AND THAT WAS WHY CARAMANLIS HAD TOLD THE LARGE GATHERING OF MILITARY OFFICERS IN THESSALONIKI LAST SATURDAY THAT "ONLY THE PRINCIPALS OF THE 7-YEAR LONG REGIME WILL BE PUNISHED...OTHERWISE THE CAREER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ATHENS 07909 011839Z

OF OFFICERS SHALL BE JUDGED ON FUTURE BEHAVIOR, NOT THEIR

PAST". AVEROFF THOUGHT THAT RUMORS OF A COUP FROM THE RIGHT WOULD PROBABLY PERSIST BUT HE SAID THAT HE AND CARAMANLIS WERE ON TOP OF THE SITUATION AND NO LONGER HAD ANY FEAR ON THIS SCORE. THERE SIMPLY WAS NOT THE SUPPORT OR BASIS FOR SUCH A MOVE NOW. AT SAME TIME AVEROFF QUALIFIED THIS REMARK BY SAYING THAT IF THERE WERE A BREAKDOWN IN PUBLIC ORDER (IN ADDITION TO DEMOCRACY, ANARCHY IS ALSO A GREEK WORD), OF COURSE ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN.

3. AS FAR AS THE LEFT WAS CONCERNED, THE PROBLEM WAS DIFFERENT. IN AVEROFF'S VIEW THEY WERE SO POORLY ORGANIZED AT THIS POINT-- "THE UNITED LEFT WILL PROBABLY BE KNOWN AS THE DISUNITED LEFT BY NEXT WEEK", HE SAID -- THAT THEY WANTED A DELAY IN THE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEMSELVES BETTER. ANDREAS PAPANDREOU WAS SAYING THE NOVEMBER 17 ELECTIONS WERE TANTAMOUNT TO AN "ELECTORAL COUP" CY CARAMANLIS. BUT DANGERS FROM THE LEFT, ACCORDING TO AVEROFF, WERE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT. IF THEY PARTICIPATED LEGALLY AND ABOVE-BOARD IN THE ELECTIONS, THEY WERE GOING TO BE SOUNDLY DEFEATED. IF THEY TRIED TO MOUNT MAJOR MANIFESTATIONS OR PROVOKE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, THEY WOULD ONLY TRIGGER SELF-DEFEATING HARSH GOVERNMENT ACTION OR A MOVE BY THE RIGHT; SO THEY COULD BE COUNTED ON TO REMAIN REASONABLY ORDERLY IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEMSELVES BETTER FOR FURTHER POLITICAL MANEUVERING AND BUILDING OF THEIR STRENGTH NEXT YEAR OR IN SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS.

4. AVEROFF SAID ONE THING THAT DID CONTINUE TO WORRY HIM WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF A POLITICAL ASSASSINATION BY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE AGAINST HOLDING ELECTIONS AND WHO MIGHT BY THIS MEANS SEEK TO PROVOKE DISORDERS AND PREPARE THE WAY FOR A NEW MILITARY TAKEOVER. I QUESTIONED HIM CLOSELY ABOUT WHETHER HE KNEW OF ANY CLEAR INDICATION THAT SUCH A PLAN EXISTED AND WHO THE TARGETS WOULD BE. HIS REPLY WAS GENERAL AND SUGGESTED THAT HIS APPREHENSION WAS BASED MORE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE ELECTION WERE CAPABLE OF EXTREME MEASURES THAN ON HARD INTELLIGENCE THAT THEY INTENDED TO EMPLOY SUCH MEASURES. HE SAID THAT THE MOST LOGICAL TARGETS WERE CARAMANLIS, HIMSELF, MAVROS OR ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, THE ASSASSINATION OF ANY OF WHOM WOULD HAVE PROFOUND REPERCUSSIONS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND CREATE THE KIND OF POPULAR CONFUSION THAT COULD BE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ATHENS 07909 011839Z

EXPLOITED BY ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS. HE ADDED THAT, AS I KNEW, SOME OF THOSE WHO HAD THE MOST TO GAIN FROM SUCH A DEVELOPMENT HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP AND FIVE PROMINENT PERSONALITIES INCLUDING FORMER DICTATOR PAPADOPOULOS HIMSELF HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND SENT TO THE ISLAND OF KEA.

5. COMMENT. AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN THE APST AVEROFF SOMETIMES OVER-DRAMATIZES AND HE HAS ALSO NOT ALWAYS BEEN AN ACCURATE

ASSESSOR OF INTERNAL GREEK POLITICS. HOWEVER, HE IS RIGHT AT THE CENTER OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN GREECE AS WE MOVE INTO THE HOMESTRETCH OF PRE-ELECTORAL ACTIVITY, AND THESE VIEWS AND CONCERNS UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECT TO SOME EXTENT THOSE OF CARAMANLIS AND HIS INNER CIRCLE.

KUBISCH

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, ELECTION FORECASTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 NOV 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** smithrj  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974ATHENS07909  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740313-0520  
**From:** ATHENS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19741180/aaaacqgj.tel  
**Line Count:** 121  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** smithrj  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 MAY 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 MAY 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <12 MAR 2003 by smithrj>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GREEK ELECTIONS: PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF  
**TAGS:** PINT, GR, (AVEROFF, EVANGELOS), (CARAMANLIS, CONSTANTINE)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005